TYCI

ZINE #4 - MARCH 2013

FREE

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DONT NEED YOU: THE HERSTORY OF RIOT GRRRL

INTERVIEW BY LAUREN MAYBERRY

KERRI KOCH OF URBAN COWGIRL PRODUCTIONS IS THE FILMMAKER BEHIND THE SEMINAL RIOT GRRRL DOCUMENTARY, 'DON'T NEED YOU: THE HERSTORY OF RIOT GRRRL.'

TELL US A BIT ABOUT DON'T NEED YOU?

Don't Need You is a documentary film that tells a general history of the US Riot Grrrl movement of the early 1990s.

WHY WERE YOU KEEN TO MAKE THE FILM?

Riot Grrrl really introduced me to feminism and feminist values and I have always been grateful to the women who put themselves out there in such a big way. I wanted to pay a tribute to the movement since it had such a positive impact on my life personally.

HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT FINDING THE WOMEN YOU INTERVIEWED?

I came up with a preliminary list of women who I wanted to talk to and got in touch with as many of them as I could. I just called or emailed people whose info I had and met other people through the original people I talked to. Everyone was super nice about getting the word out about the project!

WHAT WERE THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF MAKING IT?

It was a really positive experience overall. Everyone I met and interviewed was super supportive and open with me. I wish I could have interviewed even more people but time and access and money issues all came into play. The best part about making the film was getting to meet and talk to so many amazing women (and men) whom I've admired for so long.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR LATEST PROJECT, PASSIONS JUST LIKE MINE.

This is a documentary film that tells the story of Latino Morrissey fans in the Los Angeles area… I love documentaries because I am nosy by nature and love to hear people's stories. I believe that everyone has interesting to say and I like the idea of bringing those stories to light.

I've been a huge Morrissey fan since I was 12 and have always been looking for others who share my passion for him. I read an article in a Moz fanzine about the LA fans and thought that it was so interesting that people who I, on the surface, have so little in common with could be taken with Moz in the same way. I thought it was a good metaphor for Moz and his fans in general.

THIS IS AN EXCERPT. FOR THE FULL ARTICLE, VISIT WWW.TYCI.ORG.UK OR WWW.URBANCOWGIRLPRODUCTIONS.COM

SUSANNE JUNKER

words by Salome Colgan

THE IMAGE you are looking at on this page is by Suzanne Junker, the first example of her work I ever saw…

Susanne Junker is not widely known in Britain, but has exhibited widely in the US, Europe and Asia, where she is based in Shanghai, China. She started her career as a highly successful model, before becoming disillusioned with her position. She follows the strong tradition in female photography of using herself as her model, although doubtlessly with an insight into the role of the model which is more unique.
Perhaps because of this, she also faces more of an uphill struggle. It is a cruel fact that beauty can hinder an artists' credibility, if the artist is a woman…

Our expectations of photographs and the depiction of women in art and in the media are deeply entrenched. Perhaps Junker's work, given her previous occupation, can be best read as a critique on media and the society that consumes it. Photography occupies a unique position in visual culture as opposed to other kinds of imagery, in that they have the power to bypass our conscious filters and go straight through to our unconscious. This is why advertising works the way that it does - we believe what we see. And this affords the producer of the advertising enormous power.

From a feminist point of view, this surely makes any image of a woman particularly problematic. What reaction does the viewer have when viewing the work shown here - an attractive woman dressed only in underwear, bound with her mouth open? Junker herself is clearly playing with the proliferation of such images in media, fashion, and our culture in general but is she successful in subverting the norm? There are a plethora of images depicting sexualised women already - surely we do not need any more, whatever the gender of the photographer or artist who makes them? Moreover, it is not merely a sexualised image that is shown, but an aggressive and possibly even violent one. The woman is bound, she is objectified and degraded. To depict a fellow woman in this way does not scream 'feminism' at me, but is maybe more comparable to the claim that posing for Playboy can be an empowering experience for a woman…

THIS IS AN EXCERPT. FOR THE FULL ARTICLE, VISIT WWW.TYCI.ORG.UK.

WE ARE THEATRE - GUERRILLA GIRLS ON TOUR

TYCI's Hanna Barbaric spoke to Aphra Behn, an activist involved with the theatre collective Guerrilla Girls On Tour.

WHO ARE THE GUERRILLA GIRLS?

The Guerrilla Girls started in 1985 to address sexism and discrimination in the art world. They were formed by a bunch of visual artists who made posters which they would put up in Soho - the heart of the New York art scene at the time - using humour to get their point across. People were intrigued as to who was putting up these funny posters about whether women had to be naked to get into the Met Museum – as a subject of the art rather than as an artist.

WHAT'S WITH THE MASKS?

Since the beginning, the press has wanted to interview us but we've always wanted to be anonymous. Each member of the group takes on the name of a dead female artist and whenever we're in public, we wear the gorilla masks to conceal out true identities. The reason we do this is because we want the focus to be on the issues instead of on ourselves. In the beginning, the Guerrilla Girls were concerned that people would think that we were doing this to further our own careers, so anonymity has been a very important part of the campaign.

YOU ARE INVOLVED IN GUERRILLA GIRLS ON TOUR, THE THEATRE AND PERFORMING ARTS ARM OF THE GROUP. WHEN WAS IT DECIDED THAT DISCRIMINATION IN OTHER ARTFORMS WOULD BE LOOKED AT TOO?

In 2001, there was what we now refer to as 'the Banana Split' whereby we split into three separate branches, meaning there are now three different groups of Guerrilla Girls, one of which is Guerrilla Girls On Tour, which is all the theatre girls from the old group. Our focus is on creating plays, performances and street theatre which looks at sexism, discrimination or any issue relating to women's rights in the performing art world.

WHAT KIND OF WORK DOES WE ARE THEATRE DO?

Every year we do an annual list, exposing theatres across the US who aren't producing plays by women. We were invited to participate in the Women Playwrights International Conference and there we met women from all over the world who confirmed to us that sexism is a problem not only in theatre in the US, but internationally. We decided that instead of making up stickers or posters about it, we would try to organise something in at least the American community which would be a protest in the form of a 'speak out'. We invited all the playwrights we knew to write a play about sexism and we presented them in New York last year.

WHY IS IT SO DIFFICULT FOR WOMEN TO GET TAKEN SERIOUSLY IN THE ARTS?

I think there is a lot of discrimination still prevalent in the arts which people don't mention, and that's what we aim to do – get people talking about it. There are huge theatre companies such as the Goodman Theatre in Chicago as well as the Roundabout Theatre in New York City who produce seasons which don't contain any plays by women, and they don't think there's anything wrong with that, and they don't seem to be responding to our call. We're hoping we can encourage people to make a stand and not buy tickets from these companies who are really only giving their audiences what they think their audiences want to see, which is plays by white men. On Broadway last year, there was only one female playwright. We're being told what we should think theatre is and they are discriminating against other voices. There are female playwrights all over the place but they happen to be doing their work off-Broadway.

HOW DO WE FIX THIS?

We don't have a solution to the problem, we just want to make people aware of the issues and help people come together as a community to combat this kind of discrimination.

WHAT ARE YOUR UPCOMING PLANS?

We'll be touring our signature performance called Feminists Are Funny which focuses on contemporary women's issues and changes every time a new issue arises. March is Women's History Month and April is Sexual Violence Awareness Month, so we tour a lot around those times.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO POTENTIAL ACTIVISTS?

If you don't have a lot of time, it's as simple as writing a letter or signing a petition or making a donation to companies who do support the cause you believe in. You could form your own Guerrilla Girl type groups in your hometown addressing local issues. It doesn't tale a lot of effort to try to raise awareness, and it can be done in very small ways. Guerrilla Girls in essence was started by a very small handful of women and we still mainly work that way, in small groups within the whole.

THIS IS AN EXCERPT.
FOR THE FULL ARTICLE, VISIT
WWW.TYCI.ORG.UK OR WWW.GGONTOUR.COM.

JOSEPHINE BUTLER

Words by Jennie Brosnan of Glasgow Women's Library

JENNIE BROSNAN, AN ARCHIVE VOLUNTEER AT GLASGOW WOMEN'S LIBRARY, SHEDS LIGHT ON THE LIFE AND WORK OF ACTIVIST JOSPHINE BUTLER, AND TELLS US A BIT ABOUT THE LIBRARY ITSELF.

Josephine Butler was a prominent feminist and activist in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, who was concerned with the welfare of prostitutes. This interest in the 'unfortunates' of Victorian society stems from the Contagious Diseases Act passed by Parliament, something which dominated feminist politics for much of the 1860s.

The Contagious Disease Act (1864, 1866 and 1869) was a discriminatory piece of legislation that prescribed the enforced subjection of women, who were believed to be engaged in prostitution, to be tested for venereal or sexual diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhoea. Women who were found to be infected were placed in quarantine conditions and treated, whilst their male customers were left to continue the spread VD unchecked, undiagnosed and untreated. Many women who were not prostitutes but rather engaging in premarital sexual activity were also quarantined…

Josephine Butler was strongly influenced by the Act and campaigned against the methods used to enforce it. One of her activist activities was to produce a magazine called The Shield… The Shield had a great part to play in voicing the opinions of women in regard to matters pertaining to sex and the sexual double standard. It provided a forum for educated women who wished to discuss issues that affected women and also brought these issues to the attention of the general public, who were perhaps less educated. Despite being started as a front against the Contagious Diseases Acts in the late 1860s and early 1870s, it moved onto other issues affecting women such as the sexual double standard, prostitution, venereal disease, women's suffrage and, of course, sexual education or physiology…

Glasgow Women's Library has a collection on Josephine Butler from the Josephine Butler Society containing not only a huge wealth of issues from The Shield, but also Mrs. Butler's correspondence, Annual Reports and literature from the various organisations that she was involved in...

Glasgow Women's Library is unique in Scotland and the key hub for information on gender and women. The library and archive collections house the most significant range of feminist and women's issues related texts in Scotland. Items in the GWL's collections are wide-ranging encompassing texts, posters, badges, banners, pamphlets and materials that relate to the array of women's lives and experiences, from radical feminist literature to lesbian 'Dime' novels, dressmaking patterns to recipe books.

THIS IS AN EXCERPT. FOR THE FULL ARTICLE, VISIT WWW.TYCI.ORG.UK OR WWW.WOMENSLIBRARY.ORG.UK.

TINY BEAUTIFUL THINGS

AN ANSWER FROM THE DARK

words by Sophie Kromholz

Sophie Kromholz cannot recommend the book Tiny Beautiful Things highly enough - and here she tells us why.

I was recently given a copy of Tiny Beautiful Things – and it's one of the best things I have been given, right alongside a sense of irony.

Tiny Beautiful Things is a selection of letters and responses, both published and unpublished from the agony aunt advice column Dear Sugar, birthed on The Rumpus (www.therumpus.net). The voice behind Sugar (short for Sugar Butt) comes from real life author Cheryl Strayed, known for her best-selling memoir, Wild. Strayed transforms the voice of the agony aunt into something much more profound. She provides insightful and earnest responses that you wouldn't expect from the typically void and generic responses given in advice columns. There is an emotional rawness to the project, both in the submissions and the answers that feels reminiscent of Frank Warren's PostSecret project (www.postsecret.com).

The column is deeply personal, but not in a salacious manner. Dear Sugar strikes a more personal chord, tugging at your heartstrings. You will doubtlessly meet parts of yourself in the unfolding dialogue – a reminder that we aren't in fact all that different.

Dear Sugar reminds me to be kinder. A close friend recently quoted a Stephen Fry anecdote on being a critic:

"Picture this scene. A critic arrives at the gates of heaven. 'And what did you do?' asks Saint Peter. 'Well', says the dead soul, 'I criticised things'. 'I beg your pardon?' 'You know, other people wrote things, performed things, painted things and I said stuff like, "thin and unconvincing", "turgid and uninspired", "competent and serviceable."

That certainly isn't what I want my contribution to be – a negative. I'd rather, perhaps in the spirit and wake of New Year's resolutions, my cup overflow, and stimulate that in others. (Dirty euphemisms not intended, though there might be some of that as well.)

Sugar's words read like light and love coming from the dark abyss that is the internet and who knew you could still find that in the current media climate, right alongside cute kitten memes and porn? She is the friend you did not know you had, rooting for you to "dig", "reach", "write like a motherfucker" and do whatever else it is that you need to do. Get yourself a copy of Tiny Beautiful Things, or borrow mine.

TYCI LIVE #5

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY SPECIAL

with a live performance from
HONEYBLOOD
SUMMERSLAMS DJ set
(Glasgow Roller Derby)

SATURDAY 16TH MARCH
11pm – 3am
Bloc, 117 Bath Street, Glasgow
FREE before midnight; £2 after

Anyone who writes TYCI on their knuckles will get in free after midnight too

TYCI ON SUBCITY RADIO

Thursday 28th February 5 – 7pm
www.subcity.org/shows/tyci

Subcity Radio

We have a website where we write about things which affect us and put together features on art, theatre, music, film, politics, current affairs and most things in between. We also talk about similar stuff on our monthly radio show on Subcity.

This zine is a collection of some of the content from our site and is distributed in conjunction with our monthly live event at Bloc.

If you would like to get involved, reply to any of our articles or just generally say hi, hit us up on contact.tyci@gmail.com or visit www.tyci.org.uk.

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